

BADUDU STORIES

May L O'Brien

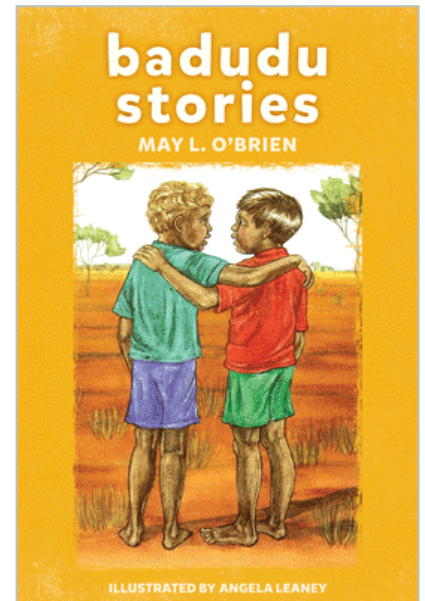
Illustrations by Angela Leaney

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Themes: English as an additional language, Wongutha language and culture, friendship, growing up

Year level: Y1 to 5

Cross-curriculum priority: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and culture



ABOUT THE BOOK

What's it like for an Aboriginal child to move from a remote community college to a mainstream school? *Badudu Stories* are true tales written from the perspectives of four children: Landy, Buruwan, Wanu and Bindabinda. They are ideal for exploring the 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and culture' cross-curriculum priority.

Landy dreams of playing for the school footy team, and finally understands English well enough to learn the rules from his coach. But when someone teases him and calls him a word he doesn't know, he becomes upset and angry. Can he still help his friends score a goal? Buruwan is excited when her teacher asks her to stay behind after class to receive a special prize. But when Miss Jones expects her to remember what to say in return, she can't quite recall what it is. On his way home from school, Wanu and his friend Miyarn stop at the garage to watch the men fixing a truck. When one of the adults asks him to help by getting a jack, Wanu sets off to find the only Jack he knows. Meanwhile, when Bindabinda's teacher becomes cross with her for chatting in class, he tells her she is 'too big for her boots'. Her schoolmate quickly explains that no matter how big she grows, she will always have tiny feet. Bindabinda is distraught!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

May L O'Brien was born in the Eastern Goldfields of Western Australia, and at the age of five was taken to Mount Margaret Mission where she spent the next twelve years. She taught in Western Australian rural and metropolitan primary schools for twenty-five years. May served in a number of other positions before being appointed Superintendent of Aboriginal Education, a position she held until her early retirement in 1988. Her total service with the Western Australian Ministry of Education was thirty-four years. May is currently National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy Ambassador for the Department of Education, Science and Training, and Patron of the Australian Principals Associations Professional Development Council's 'Dare to Lead: taking it on' Project.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Angela Leaney was born in Perth in 1968. In recognition of her enthusiasm and talent she received the coveted Hoechst National Textile Award on completion of her degree in fine arts at Edith Cowan University. She went on to exhibit her work in Melbourne before returning to Perth in 1990 where she works from a studio based in the foothills of Perth.

STUDY NOTES

LITERACY: COMPREHENDING TEXTS THROUGH LISTENING, READING AND VIEWING

Before reading: class discussion

1. Discuss how English is one of many languages across Australia, and across the world.
 - a. Why might people in different parts of a country, or in different countries, speak different languages?
 - b. Discuss how all languages are equally important and deserving of respect.
 - c. Geography: sitting in a circle around a map of the world, children can place red stickers on some countries that speak English on the map. They can place blue stickers on some countries that speak French. Other colours for some countries that speak Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, Arabic etc. What other languages do the children know of that they would like to map?
2. Imagine going to school in a new language – how difficult it must be!
Play a 2-minute video clip of a familiar television show that your class enjoys, but in another language.
 - a. Who understood the clip?
 - b. How did it make students feel when they couldn't understand what was being said? Confused? Annoyed? Frustrated? Sad? Scared? Anxious? Have students pair-share with the person next to them. Create a class list of these emotions. Are they mainly negative or positive emotions?
 - c. As a class, name the four skills of language: Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking. Which skills do students think would be hardest in a new language? Which would be easiest? Why? Discuss how every person has a different learning style and so might find different skills easier or harder.
3. Briefly discuss the name and historical background of the Aboriginal people who are traditional owners of the land on which your school is built. Listen to a short clip of the language, or invite a speaker of the language to talk to your class. Discuss how children might find it difficult when first starting an English-speaking school – as the students can hear, the two languages are very different!
4. Many schools offer classes in foreign languages.
 - a. What language/languages are taught at your school?
 - b. Can students recall a time when the teacher said a word they didn't understand, or when they could not understand the instructions for an activity? Have students pair-share their experiences for a few minutes, then share as a class.

Predicting

5. Explore the blurb and titles of the four stories. Brainstorm possible predictions for each of the stories. Create a prediction chart detailing what students think may happen.
*Note: It is often interesting to keep this chart to look over at the end – amusing false predictions inevitably arise!
6. In the language of the Wongutha people 'badudu' means 'not what it seems'. Why do you think the author chose this as the title for this book?

Considering the context of the book

7. Discuss the historical context of the Mount Margaret Mission (see pages 70, 71 and 73).
 - a. What were the Stolen Generations? Why did Aboriginal children sometimes live on missions? A useful source can be found online at: www.noongarculture.org.au/stolen-generations
 - b. Read the author's biography (page 70) – did she live at Mount Margaret Mission? Are the tales in this book fiction or non-fiction? What is the difference between these two labels?
8. Briefly flick through the book and list key features (such as the contents page, the writing in bold italics that indicates the Wongutha language, and the pronunciation guide at the back).
 - a. What area in Australia do the Wongutha people come from? Refer to the map on page 72.
 - b. Where do the Wongutha people live now? How is this land currently used?

- c. Research the history and culture of the traditional owners of the area where you live (cross-curricular links: History and Geography). You may like to use the following headings:
 - i. Name of Aboriginal group
 - ii. Geographic area
 - iii. Laws
 - iv. Spiritual beliefs
 - v. Traditional diet
 - vi. Shelter
 - vii. Hunting/gathering tools and techniques

During reading: comprehension strategies

Badudu Stories can be used for several different reading sessions including:

- Modelled reading as a whole class
- Shared reading in student pairs
- Guided reading in small groups
- Independent reading

Comprehension strategies to practise with younger readers (Years 1–3)

- Sounding out words aloud (not only in your head)
- Phonics (blending and segmenting)
- Slowing reading rate for comprehension
- Self-monitoring for understanding
- Using illustrations to help predict unknown words
- Predicting words by recognising familiar letter patterns
- Re-reading to crosscheck graphophonic information

Depending on the needs of your class, the stories can be used to practise finding initial and final sounds (e.g. point to a word on the page that starts with 's') to develop letter/sound awareness. Or they can be used to practise fluency and expression for more advanced readers.

Comprehension strategies to practise with middle readers (Years 4–5)

- Monitoring, questioning and re-predicting
- Inferring
- Summarising
- Identifying key ideas/themes
- Drawing conclusions

The pronunciation guide

9. Explore the pronunciation guide at the back of the book with your class and practise saying some Wongutha words together. Create double-sided flashcards with English/Wongutha words from the pronunciation guide. Have children play in pairs, looking at a card with the English side up, and saying its Wongutha equivalent. The first to get ten correct answers wins.

After reading: written activities

This novel can be used as a springboard for many different aspects of literacy study, depending on the needs and interests of your class. For example:

Younger readers (Years 1–3)

10. Recount writing and sequencing activities
 - a. Write a recount of the events in 'Smartie Pants' or any of the *Badudu Stories*. Pay careful attention to simple punctuation (full stops and capital letters).
 - b. Sequence pictures from the story 'Smartie Pants' (or any of the *Badudu Stories*) in the correct order and write a sentence below each to describe what is happening.

Middle readers (Years 4–5)

11. Write a diary entry as your favourite character from one of the *Badudu Stories*.
12. Research and write a report on the Stolen Generations and Mount Margaret Mission under the following subheadings:
 - a. What were the Stolen Generations?
 - b. When did it happen?
 - c. Where did it happen?
 - d. Who did it involve?
 - e. Why did it happen?

Additional activities for each story

'Smartie Pants'

13. Sportsmanship: write a definition of what good sportsmanship means to you.
 - a. Write a short story about a character who displays good or poor sportsmanship in your favourite sport.

'What Do You Say?'

14. Consider different traditions – what constitutes 'good manners' in different cultures? Create a list.
15. Discuss what 'good manners' means in your family. Is it different to other families? (e.g. shoes off indoors in Japan, eating with your hands vs. eating with cutlery in India.)
16. Research and write a list of things that constitute 'good manners' in the Wongutha culture.

'Which Jack?'

17. Create a list of five words with double/multiple meanings – e.g. Jack and Jack.
 - a. Write a joke where someone mixes up these meanings.
 - b. Create a cartoon strip about a situation where someone mixes up these meanings.

'Too Big for Your Boots'

18. Research the Chinese custom of binding feet to keep them small (that Bindabinda refers to). Write an information report using the following subheadings:
 - In what time period was this popular?
 - Where in China was it most common?
 - Who did it? Men and women? Or only women?
 - How did they do it?
 - Why did they do it?
 - a. Write an opinion piece about whether you think this was a positive or a negative practice.
 - b. Write an article for a magazine on the topic.
19. Write a class definition for the term 'idiom'. How many more idioms (such as 'too big for your boots') can you think of? (Class competition: which student can list the most?)

Just for fun: an activity for early finishers

20. Create your own language with a friend. What symbols will you use to represent the different letters of the alphabet? Write each other secret messages that none of your other classmates will understand!

CROSS-CURRICULAR LINKS

Mathematics

21. Research statistics on the top five most frequently spoken languages in Australia. Record your results in a table and graph them.
22. Research statistics on the top five most frequently spoken languages in the world. Record your results in a table and graph them.

History

Research topics

23. Why are certain languages spoken in what some people might term 'unexpected places' (e.g. why is French spoken in Canada)?
24. Create a timeline of the colonisation of Australia.
25. How many different Indigenous languages exist in Australia?
26. What Aboriginal place names can you find in your local area? Can you find out what they mean?

Art

27. Research famous Indigenous artists in Australia and arrange a visit to an artwork exhibited in the state gallery. Create class artworks that allow children to experiment with the subject matter and techniques modelled.